



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE STRUGGLE FOR IMMORTALITY.

LIFE is either a problem or a play ; which, will be decided by temperament rather than by circumstance. The instinct of the dramatic, the passion to be pleased, are as compulsory in their way as suffering or thought. Superficiality, we must remember, may be as inevitable as sensitiveness. The man who said that for his part he always got away from unhappy people, had either more candor or less tact than most of his sort ; but it is a sort that can no more be disregarded in an estimate of the world than any other of the defective classes. The impulse with which we embrace or repulse the higher form of fact, may be the decisive trait that must generalize us in a classification of species at which science has not yet arrived.

Individuality is the one essential fact of life ; its presence, in whatever surplus or wryness, is matter of calculable regard, as its absence is of futile regret. There never was a wiser saying than his who told us that for our faults of exuberance there might be all possible remedies ; for our deficiencies — none. A nicer distinction between defects and deficiencies might further refine the illustration.

Who are they who conquer nature, create kingdoms, discover truth, rule society, comfort anguish, and purify evil ? It is truism to say : The men and women who have been themselves. Whom do we seek in some famine of the mind ? Not him who conforms, who is fractional rather than integral. Or to whom do we turn when our hearts are breaking ? Not to the smoothest, but to the strongest personality that is intelligible or available to our own. We all know men who are mental derricks, hoisting everybody within reach. We have all felt people who are moral cyclones, hurling everything out of their track.

Yet force is not of necessity noisy. Love is not boisterous. The atmosphere is not obtrusive. A woman's will may be silent, and may "be done," like Heaven's. "The strong power called weakness" has its own kingdom. We may be in the clutch of the earthquake, or the slave of a still, small voice. Insistence has many natures; they are alike only in this: that they insist.

The tendency of individuality is to vigor; and because to vigor, therefore to duration of life. This seems a very simple thing to say. If it be strictly true and thoroughly believed, it may be seen to have complex results, some of which it will be the object of this paper to consider; not as truths which can presume to be called new, but rather, by the season of prevailing thought, renewed.

That the trend of individuality is toward force and permanence, we are reminded at every turn. Diffusion is feebleness. Speech weakens feeling. The flood lessens the current. Shallowness produces evaporation. Commonness reduces preciousness. Deep emotions are perpetuated; mighty love means constancy, and marked hate is incurable. Vigorous characters reproduce themselves; emphasized characteristics are hereditary; and so on. The list is practically endless.

In this last connection, we are all more or less familiar with the work of modern science; a work whose value, as we shall presently see, only begins with its physical aspects, and out of which a higher science has still to be evolved by a discoverer possibly yet unborn.

Our late great apostle of natural science has popularized for us several indispensable terms, in which it is as natural for the mind to think to-day, as it was for the child Montaigne to exclaim in Latin when his father fainted. One of these most useful words is Selection. The facts of selection—natural, sexual, and unconscious—in the history of man, and of the lower organizations, are established for intelligence beyond the right of ignorance to question. These facts, and the meaning of the facts, are in our primers now. The same may be said of that most happy phrase—the struggle for existence.

"Nothing is easier," says Darwin himself, "than to admit in words the truth of the universal struggle for life, or more difficult—at least I have found it so—than constantly to bear this conclusion in mind. Yet, unless it be thoroughly engraved

in the mind, the whole economy of nature will be dimly seen, or quite misunderstood."

The apparently trifling or irrelevant minutiae crowding the pages which lay bare to the world the curiously interesting processes that go to the creation of a great theory, have a special, but not always superficially evident, value in the direction of our thought.

We are told, for instance, that if the multiplication from a single pair of elephants were unchecked by accident or death, in seven hundred and fifty years there would be nineteen million elephants alive. We are reminded that in Paraguay neither cattle, horses, nor dogs run wild, because their infant progeny are destroyed by a certain parasitic fly, which has preëmpted that vague, geographical region. We read that heart's-ease and red clover would disappear from England if humble-bees were exterminated there. Or we hear of the "walking-stick insect," which, that it may protect itself from danger, is made to resemble a "walking-stick closely overgrown with moss." Or again, we are asked to believe that the ball-and-socket decorations on the wing-feathers of the Argus pheasant are æsthetically appreciated by the female during courtship. Or our attention is concentrated upon the fact that among the Kalmucks, who practice the custom of bridal races (the bride having a fair start), "no instance occurs of a girl being caught unless she has a partiality for the pursuer." Or we are told that if human reproduction were not offset by mortality, there would not, in a thousand years, be standing-room upon the earth for the progeny of man. Again, we are reminded that the Holy Inquisition killed off the bravest, freest, and most independent minds of its time, and thus appreciably depleted Europe of her best material. Or it is suggested that the culture of Greece and the empire of Rome seem to have their chief purpose and value as subsidiaries "to the great stream of Anglo-Saxon emigration to the West." Or we are asked if the idea of a universal and beneficent Creator be not the result, in the mind of man, of elevation "by long-continued culture."

The connection of these rather burly statements with the spiritual future of mankind is not at first sight apparent; and, to the merely scientific student, may remain obscure. Yet the continuity in such a progression of selected facts is subtle, and the workmanship nice. From beginning to end, the link within the link is the force of individuality. The relation of individ-

uality to spirituality completes the chain which, in view of that relation, it is here our purpose to examine.

Man is born to fight for his life. This is the upshot of the new wisdom. (After all it is rather an old wisdom.) He has been developed from ancestral, inferior organizations which, in turn, have had to fight for their lives. All the great and little facts of history converge to this truth. Conflict with the elements has mown down non-combatants. The attraction between the sexes has served as the great appreciator of personal values. Death, like "gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone," has stood guard against the event of the world becoming uninhabitable from excess of life. Climate, disease, accident, anguish, love, war, superstition, even civilization itself, have each served their turn in the awful battle. All are but so many foes to the new-born babe. Carlyle put one view of the truth in his rough way when he said that the ultimate question between any two human beings is: "Can I kill thee? or, canst thou kill me?" We rate by thousands of years the age of the great design carved in the Cambodian temple, which represents a wheel of inchoate, writhing forms—serpents, dragons, monkeys, and men—revolving in a conflict vast and mysterious, and typifying "The Struggle of Natural Life toward the Ideal and Spiritual." Existence is a challenge. Circumstance is the gauntlet. Success is victory, and failure is defeat. Death is (or may be) escape.

It will be seen that to say all this is to say simply that the struggle for existence is decided by the ratio of individuality to the odds. Whether we have to do with the duels of mastodons in a prehistoric forest, or the conflict of an Esquimau with the elements, or the broken heart of Sappho, or the dying bed of Keats; whether we are dealing with the extermination of a tribe of Kaffirs, or the decline of an over-civilized empire, or the fall of an outlawed religion, the radical elements of the question are the same. Personality is power. Behind every great success is an individual. There is the absence or the destruction of one in every great defeat. Who conquers? The integer. Who fails? The fraction.

It should be remembered, of course, that individuality may be subtle or strong, and that conquest may be apparent or real. Success may be a matter of muscle or of imagination. Defeat may come from brain or brawn. There is victory of the diges-

tion and failure of the temper. There is failure of the nerves and victory of the spirit. There is weakness of the conscience and power of the will. There is success in the incidental and temporary, and there is failure in the essential and permanent. There is deification of the body and insult to the soul. There is ruin of the body and construction of the soul. An untimely fit of hysteria may cost a woman the intellectual ambition of all her days. A man with the prosperities of life in his hand may lose, by a rude word or a selfish deed, the heart of the woman who would have been worth to him the world and the glory thereof. Of Napoleon, it has been said by a recent historian, that he was a threefold being, of active intellect, imperious will, and deficient moral sense; and, from the hollow of that deficiency, history measures his surplus and his success. Christ was called a failure by his contemporaries.

It needs no historian to remind us that individuality is, in fact, the result of a conflict between widely differing, and by no means necessarily obvious agencies—the effect of counteraction between the evident and the suggested, or between the seen and the unseen.

It needs no prophet to tell us that this counteraction is to become more complicated as it is overtaken by civilization; that the proportion of the obvious to the latent is likely to be lessened; that the relativity of the evident to the suggested will undergo change; and that the ratio of the seen to the unseen may be expected to suffer mathematical transference.

This is to say, in brief, that, for a man to become a force, is to be one among diversely many, or one through harmoniously many things. And, that to become a force in the future, is probably to be a much less simple matter than it is now, or has ever been. An individual, in fact, represents not only a huge amount of fighting capacity, but must represent an increasing amount of tactical ability. A powerful personality may be said to be what the Hahnemannians call “a complex of symptoms.”

The love of life is one of the elements of life; we might say that it is what physiologists call one of the “proximate principles” of life. It is not enough merely to say that the love of life is normal—it *is* life. The most exhausted victim of existence will admit that it is his exhaustion which ails him. Bulwer says somewhere that there is a want more fierce than the want

of food, more terrible than the want of sleep; it is "the want to die." The world-weariness which is so incontestable a feature of our age, was foretold long ago by an ancient Persian proverb, which ran: "When men, in passing by the newly-made grave, shall say, 'Would, God, I were there!' the end of the world is nigh."

But even suicide in no sense intrudes upon the main truth, simple as a primary color, and organic as the action of the heart;—that to be alive is to wish to live. He who desires death has already begun to die. He who reaches the point of encroaching upon death is already virtually dead. Such encroachment is simply a form of the universal fact. The passion for self-destruction is but one means of accomplishing dissolution. One man has typhus fever; one cuts his throat; one has consumption; another has suicide. Each is a disease. The incipient cough that nobody notices, and the first toying with the cocked pistol that nobody knows, may be, for philosophical purposes, the same thing. This is not the place to discuss the moral aspects of suicide, of which I have here nothing to say.

The undeniable extension of self-destruction, as tabulated by the best statisticians of the subject to-day, only substantiates the premise in a high sense. It is reluctantly admitted by some of the bleakest materialists among these statisticians that one of the prevailing causes of the increase of suicide is the increase of religious unbelief. This is, perhaps, the subtlest illustration yet in hand of our point—setting quite aside its use in a didactic sense, as I would be understood to do, in this connection.

The doomed being who anticipates death everlasting, as his part and lot in the problem of universal suffering, stretches forth his hand to clutch his portion, and is, in effect, already dead, because he is to die. Death sets in with the passion for death. Life implies the love of life. Other things being equal, the healthy body craves life. Other things being equal, the healthy soul demands life. It may be said that none of us are ever actually beaten in the battle of existence except by untimely death, by madness, or by what it is now a little old-fashioned to call sin.

The desire for eternal life is a very old human preference. It must be also admitted to be a very strong one. It is impossible here to do more than recall the existence of the immense

mass of scholarship and sentiment, faith and dogmatism, wisdom and folly, which have been wreaked upon the sole aspect of the subject that raises the question whether belief in the future life is intuitive in the mind of man.

This paper does not presume to enter upon that venerable and tremendous discussion, but would suggest its huge proportions in the history of thought as significant far beyond the reach of mere argument. However we come by the wish to live forever, the fact seems to be that most of us have it. Whatever were the private views of the Cave-men, or even the current of thought in the Jewish theocracy upon this point, it seems to be true so far as the evidential testimony is in, that the race has desired, if not expected, continuance after death.

This fact alone would not prove that we should get what we desire; but it is certainly not a good reason for showing why we should miss it. To say that no subject whatever has so deeply stimulated the human mind, as that of a life to come, is not to overstate the case. The agitations of love and the consequences of death have been the two fundamental objects of interest in this world; and of these twin princes, the gentler has yielded the crown to the sterner brother. Where is the lover whose ardor would not be chilled by an apparition or an earthquake?

A glance at the literature of eschatology as represented in the catalogues of even our secular and popular libraries, astonishes one who looks at them for the first time. A celebrated publisher once said that to put the word Heaven into the title of a book was enough to insure the sale of it. I remember to have heard one of the most philosophical of men—the least impetuous either in thought or speech, and one of the best trained in intellect and character—say that he would prefer any life, even that of a supposable world of woe, to annihilation. A man who has acquired the habit of living is loth to suspend it. His custom has become his appetite; it seems to him even to have become his right.

Christian philosophy has a certain respectable position among systems of thought. As a system, it has somewhat emphatic bearings upon the idea which we are pursuing.

It is the great point, so to speak, of the Christian religion, that it conforms vigorously to the vigorous love of existence in

the existing. It meets this high instinct on lofty ground; it treats it with the respect due any such elemental impulse; it deals not with the dream, but the deed; it offers no fantasy, but a promise; it plunges us in no reverie, but holds us to an assurance; and mocks us not with myths, but controls us with facts.

"God," it has been well said, by a great metaphysician, "is chiefly of interest to us so far as he is the condition of our immortality." Recognizing this truth, Christian philosophy squarely offers duration of life to the individual.

Such an offer, it will be said, has been made before. True, and happily true. Were this not so, had the race existed six thousand years — or sixty — more or less, with no more hope of perpetuity after death than so many kangaroos, the originality of Christianity might have been her practical destruction, and that which has been accepted as an inspiration might have been set aside as an "ism." It may be claimed, however, that the Christian form of the offer of immortality is, up to this time, the most reasonable which has been presented in the history of religion; that it is the most explicit, the most logical, the most finished; in short, that it is a progression from other and lower phases of the same thing, and in so far entitled to the respect due to any highly-advanced organization.

Passing the outworn superstitions, whether of savagery or civilization, it seems to be fashionably possible at present to be either a Buddhist or an Agnostic — assuming that one has missed of being a Christian. Of these three forms of belief toward which the consensus of the intelligent inclines, to-day, it will not be disputed that Christianity is the only one which advances consistent hope of personal immortality. The vagueness and vagary of Buddhism upon this doctrine are too well known to need explanation here. The "Dream-religion" may, or may not, make you a man or a cloud, at the thither side of death; it is not clear whether one shall be an angel or an atom. Much aesthetico-religious sensibility which luxuriates over the "Light of Asia," would be cured by a sound acquaintance with the Suttas or Dhammapadas in a standard translation. "Never," says Max Müller, "had a scheme of salvation been put forth . . . so independent of, so even antagonistic to the belief in a soul, the belief in God, and the hope of a future life."

Shall we ask Agnosticism for her eternal hope? Hollow is her evasive reply! Such dreary elusion is not a new one, at best,

in the history of belief. "When," says Müller again, "after many centuries of thought, a pantheistic or monotheistic unity has been evolved out of the chaos of polytheism . . . there has always arisen, at last, a school to whom theological discussions have lost their interest, and who have sought for a new solution of the questions to which the theologies have given inconsistent answers, in a new system in which man was to work out here on earth his own salvation." Up to a certain point Agnosticism has, indeed, pilfered from Christianity in the attempt to substitute for a strong and glorious affirmation a weak and pitiful negation. So intense is the love of life in the human soul that even this negation is pathetically snatched. He who has no longer any hope of existence beyond the incident of his own death-bed, palliates his condition by prating of the invention of immortality by-and-by, as one may take out a patent on souls; or, he who buries the beloved of his life, standing comfortless at the grave's gap, listens to feeble talk of her continuance in the future of the race.

The Christian religion, in offering duration to the individual, is, as we have said, explicit and logical; but it is also conditional. It is difficult for the mind reared among the familiar speech with which most of us dispose of this subject, to be alertly aware of the fact that immortality is nowhere proved to be a natural right. Yet such is the fact. Like suffrage, immortality is not a right, but a privilege. It is not property, but a gift. This gift is offered to you or me upon conditions which we can accept or deny at will. The founder of our religion makes, we may say that he constitutes, the conditions. Everlasting life is, in fact, according to this religion, bestowed by Jesus Christ upon the human soul. The consequence of declining this gift and its conditions would seem to be logically, if not theologically, wrapped in the phrase, "everlasting death." But this opens debatable ground, upon which our paper can do no more than glance.

Theology is not Christianity. The word and the creed are not one and the same. The premise of the master and the conclusion of the priest may diverge through pressure of a hundred inevitable causes.

The writer is no theologian and is not writing to theologians, and is loath to touch upon a point which laymen must treat rather by instinct and judgment than by equipment. Yet the great common sense and heart of the world will have their way with the great common problems. The universal must abide the uni-

versal test. The question whether any portion, large or small, of the human race is to suffer forever is, at least, one which it would seem to be in poor taste to treat flippantly, and poor religion to treat acrimoniously. If there be any question above all others in which people who think as well as feel, or people who feel as well as think, should grant each other large and solemn charity, this is that question.

It is not a matter to be frivolously set aside, either by theological prejudice, or personal preference. It is difficult to suppose that the eternal future of the mass of the human race depends upon the culture of an exegete, or the translation of a Greek word. Whatever may be the truth, or the choice between the chances of the truth, such a choice should be made in a spirit above the reproach of controversial bitterness or pettiness, and "on the height" of a sacred gentleness of soul, wherein "lies repose."

It would be seen by an exegetical study of the subject that that may be at least no unscriptural, or unreasonable form of Christian faith, which offers immortality—any kind of immortality—as a gift, on specified conditions, to the individual. To this extent, therefore, Christianity may be called in support of the suggestion to which we find ourselves now clearly directed by the train of thought that we have pursued; and, in so far, those who are themselves believers in the value of the Christian faith, and tolerant of its differing interpretations of the Bible text, may be inclined to follow us. For those who are not such, the argument stands or falls by itself; lacking, in that case, a certain emphasis, but not, we trust, without order.

"He that believeth on me," said Jesus Christ, "hath everlasting life." "Immortality," said Emerson, "will come to such as are fit for it. He who would be a great soul in the future must be a great soul now." Both the religious and the philosophical aspects of our thought have their force; he who accepts either, has something; he who holds both, has much. "Blessed be the day," cries the modern Buddhist, "when I shall draw the veil from the face of my beloved But the veil on the face of my beloved is the dust of this earthly body." "There is a spiritual body," asserted the Christian apostle. "I am the resurrection," said his Master.

Now, then, it will be remembered that we have gone over certain ground in this paper, not unfamiliar in itself, but holding, as the writer hopes, some fresh relation to contiguous terri-

tory. We have traced the nature and effects of personality as a factor in power. We have noticed that the tendency of individuality is to vigor, and because to vigor, therefore to duration of life. We have remembered that modern science has given us proof so overwhelming as to partake of the nature of revelation, of a truth so familiar that we had all but overlooked it — the truth that man, to the most solemn ends, is born to fight for his life. We have recollected that the struggle for existence is decided by the ratio of individuality to the odds; that individuality may be subtle or strong; that victory may be real or apparent; that individuality is likely to become, with the progress of civilization, a more complex fact, in which the relation between the seen and the unseen may change its present proportions. We have called to mind, also, that the love of life is one of the elements of life, and that death sets in with the passion, whether real or apparent, for death. We have remembered that the desire for eternal, and therefore unseen, life is an important human impulse; and we have alluded to the contributions of Christian philosophy toward the love of eternal life especially as framed in the theory of conditional immortality. We have further suggested that the Christian offer of immortality is a progression from lower phases of the same thing, and entitled to the respect due to any highly-advanced organization.

Does it not remain to be said that strength of individuality is probably proportional to the strife for eternal existence? Tremendous is the truth, if this be true. A man may be negligent of his own noblest nature if he deem himself the victim of a blind chance, or a relentless tyrant, or even an arbitrary governor. He must start, if he be a man, to a view of life and time which puts him on his mettle before both. The appeal to self-respect, in such a view, is as powerful as self-respect can bear. Suppose that this view be true. Suppose that the struggle for existence which begins with the Protozoa, or the Promammalia, and advances* to Aristotle or Darwin, has become nothing more nor less than a struggle for immortality.

Suppose that the challenge is thus broadly thrown down to you, or me, or Newton, or the Jukes family. Live or die! It is

* We say advances. We cannot say ends; for we have no evolutionist yet returned from the silence of apparent end, to classify whatever possible superior form of being may exist beyond reach of our microscope or telescope.

your own affair. You have the conditions and the chances. Accept or decline. No gods, pagan or Christian, shall interfere to compel you. Your personality has sacred and awful rights. You are caught in the machinery of inextricable law. Love is a part of that law; but both love and law must take the material that you give them. Of what stuff are you made? Abide the test. It is ours to ask. Are you a man or a molecule? Are you a soul or a cell? It is yours to decide. Give us the proof.

Truth has endless corridors by which to approach conviction, and one can see in such a view as this, a marked appeal to certain types of nature which seem to be left out of the usual religious argument. It is, perhaps, true that many a person objects to troubling himself with immortality, either as an advantage or a disadvantage, when his attention is concentrated exclusively upon the fact that eternal life involves definite moral conditions. That it should imply, also, certain conditions of a very different sort, is quite another matter; that it should touch the intellect, the force, the good sense, or even the simple pluck of a man — this is to be regarded. We may be conquered through our pride, when we cannot be won through our conscience. He who does not find it any longer exciting to be told that he is not good enough to live forever, will scarcely hear without interest that he is not strong enough. Many of us would rather be called bad than weak. It is an arrest to the thoughtfulness of any man but an inferior one, to show him reason why he may be in the way of losing an obvious gain, through inferiority. Precisely that, such a view of the struggle for immortality as we have suggested would undertake to show.

In proportion to the force and vigor of the individual is the love of life, present and to come. Eternal life should be, at least, as much a test of power as temporal life. Individuality means the acquisition of life; one rates oneself accordingly. To love life, to strike out for it, to overcome it, to insist on it, is strength. To fail of it, is weakness. We do not stay just now, to remind you that a pure heart, forgiven sin, consecrated deeds, are the conditions of immortality, and that a given being may miss of it by missing these; we say only that he misses it, because there is not enough of him, or because he does not make enough of himself to get it. He of the centrifugal nature, whose mind works from within outward, moving in spirals about moral problems; who finds it easy to doubt accepted truths because of what strikes

him repeatedly, at the same point, as the excess of his own originality—he will be reluctant to believe that he may be declining immortality simply because he is not man enough to have it. Yet, metaphysically as physically, the argument holds. He is thrust upon a battle-field, enormous and deadly. As for the bread of the body, so for the bread of the soul, he fights. As for life, love, success, fame, and the trifles of time, so for eternal hope, and its majestic possibilities, he shall be challenged. Is he a man? let him show his colors. Is he a soldier? ask for his scars. Does he hold his ground? Does he shirk, desert, surrender, or fly? Let him look to it. By so much as he is a force, he will keep the field.

Retreat from the great effort of being to secure its own continuity, may have whatever moral aspects; it is at least true, that to retreat is to be beaten; that to be beaten is to be weak; and that such weakness may be the last fate which has presented itself as probable to the type of soul most likely to succumb.

For, let us notice, the struggle for immortality is not a simple and obvious affair. The armor and saber, the powder and shot, are not, in fact, altogether the urgent and the tangible. The blood and dust and mortal cries may not be the apparent, or the audible; and he who is hurled down “unable or to move or die,” may give no sign. As with the silent defeats of life, so with its dumb victories. He needs the higher education in the deaf-mute language of the soul, who would apply his tactics to the estimate; and his is the best martial culture of the spirit which is most conscious of its own unfitness to specialize that estimate. But so much as this it is easy to see: as civilization refines, the intricacy and delicacy of the struggle for existence must refine with it; and, that this is likely to be true of eternal as well as of temporal existence, the course of our argument has already suggested, and now finds itself obliged to emphasize.

The struggle for eternal life is no light matter, like ladies' calisthenics, which exercise only certain muscles. The athletics of the soul are virile; they are impartial; they are not ornamental and fanciful. Development is demanded for use, not for exhibit. Tissue and sinew and blood and bone respond; now this, now the other, urgency on one, relief of the other, pressure here, repose there, strain to-day, rest to-morrow, this faculty aroused, the other lulled, this feat to be performed, that danger scorned, a boy's medal won to-day, and a man's life

saved next year ; thus the soul, in the hands of the Silent Trainer, grows in frame and fiber. Will we play battle-door and shuttlecock for our prizes ? Or close and wrestle for them ?

We have spoken of the evolution of a higher than the physical, from the physical science which holds so disproportionate, but none the less useful, an influence over the thought of the instructed world to-day. "We are spirits," said one of the coolest of scientific men, a century ago. "We are spirits. That bodies should be lent to us while they can afford us pleasure, assist us in acquiring knowledge, or in doing good to our fellow-creatures, is a kind and benevolent act of God." The practical Franklin showed his keen good sense in this matter-of-fact way of expressing a truth which is too often approached upon the mystical and most difficult side. We are, indeed, spirit ; and we may, without hesitation, dispute so much as this with him who begins by saying that we are matter. It cannot be denied that we have at least as good a right to start with the one assertion, as he with the other. "I should never," says Elizabeth Peabody, "teach a child, 'You have a soul,' but, 'You have a body.'"

Let us then call the struggle for immortality an advanced form of the lower encounter. It is a struggle historic and dramatic, as it is involved and unconcluded. A man cannot fight this fight with part of his nature. It takes the whole of him. A stout fist avails him little without sound thought. He cannot gain the day by his intellect, lest he lose it on the side of his heart. Neither does emotion win without reflection, and hysteria is a poor weapon to substitute for common sense. We find at once, that we have approached herein a problem complex to the edge of mystery. For, there enters into this struggle a strange law of spiritual selection, differing from that governing the conflicts in the lower phases of organization, as fineness differs from momentum, the telephone from a war-cry, or the flower Charity from the Inquisition.

The conditions of immortality wholly refuse to rest upon the piers which hold the conditions of conquest in the life of time. Brute force ceases now to keep its relative value in this larger contest. There is what may be called a brute force of the mind, of which this is equally and terribly true. Sheer intellect has no greater chance at everlasting life, than sheer muscle. Immor-

tality is not promised by their Creator, to great men. Mere mind holds no passport to eternity. There is no limited express to Paradise for able people. Goethe, for being Goethe, is none the more likely to last forever. Frederica, so far as we can see, stands quite as good, or a better chance.

The law of spiritual selection would seem to be at once severe and delicate. The obscurest mother, transmitting a pure heart to her boys, never having heard of protoplasm, and knowing no philosophy beyond her prayers, may enter into this higher contention with an equipment which the discoverer of the missing link might envy. It is quite conceivable that the soul of a felon might survive the soul of a prince or a priest. The tests of the world fail. Fine causes, and finer sequences, enter the list. Who are we that we should win? What is our standard of success? What the temper of our weapons? We buy and sell, we woo and wed, we gain us a friend, or fame; and the stranger without our gates, or the servant under our feet, may be fighting for a soul's life where we are fooling with it, and may, therefore, be better worth life, and so the more likely to live. For law is but law, and spiritual law loses nothing of its grip for its gain in quality, and holds us none the less robustly because of a touch so velvet.

Suppose that this view be the true one. Suppose that he who wishes to live indefinitely, or always, is the subject of such law. Suppose that the complete and complex nature—physical, mental, moral, spiritual—becomes, by an ascending scale of strain, the soldier in such a strife. Suppose that the ultimate atom of the permanent individual may prove to be the vigor or the honor of his conscience. Suppose that from this, as, in the physical case, from the cell of the embryo, the life of what we call a soul evolves. Suppose that the development of this spiritual cell-life is, to the requisite extent, under the control of the human will. Suppose that this development is governed by a just, or even a generous relativity to the environment which spiritual science is not yet advanced enough to formulate. Suppose that the grandest work performed by the physical science of our times should prove to be its contribution to such a spiritual science, and that such a spiritual science is yet to become a matter of more orderly, more manly, and more nearly universal acceptance, than any form of religious belief detached from natural research is now likely to command. Suppose that the science of the soul

and the science of the rock find their common interpreter. Suppose that the revelation of fact and the revelation of faith are met together. Suppose that the progress of fact does not proceed, as Spencer would have it, from evolution to dissolution, but from evolution through apparent dissolution to real evolution; and that the splendid blossom of the greatest discovery of modern thought has as yet but begun to bud.

We ask for this aloe, precious and perfect, in the name of reason, that it may be rooted in the heart of the hope of everlasting life, for which it is our honorable service to contend.

We ask for this hope in the name of science, which has rendered unto nature the things that are nature's, but unwittingly unto God the things that are God's. The glory of the law moves on. The higher science has its prophets. Its scholars are to come. In an age when we are called upon to study "the sagacity and morality of plants," we may be justified in demanding an adaptation of scientific method to the fine fibers and hidden seed of the human spirit.

If these things be so, the mind is dazzled by the vision of those future types of which both faith and science promise us so much. To what refinement and enforcement the high organizations of this present life may rise, he only can intelligently imagine who has the student's lense and the believer's eye. What man may be a century or two hence, what the average of nature with which he must contend, what the ideal by which he shall achieve superiority, what, in short, the intensification of his entire form of strife with his conditions, it is only possible for us to guess by some conception of the fact of spiritual nature, and the nature of a science based upon that fact. What the select man, survivor of this or the future environment, may become in the life beyond, to what unimagined evolution he may be liable, through what supreme equilibration of power incapable of dissolution the rhythm of spiritual motion shall sweep him, who can say?

Once again. We have spoken of the love of life as one of the constituent elements of life; and, in this connection, we have observed that death sets in with the passion for death. It is reasonable to suggest that in the higher, as in the lower life, the analogy holds. In the strife for eternal existence, it may be true that the amount of contending desire represents the amount of contending power; that the love of eternal life, itself, bespeaks, to an extent, the capacity for it; that the instincts or

the impulses of belief are not without their significance, other things being equal, as salvable agencies ; in short, that the longing to live forever not only carries with it the power to conquer the materials of duration, but indicates in a measure the force of the life-principle in the soul. A man may live forever because he loves his eternal life, and he loves his eternal life because he is to live forever.

If, on the other hand, death sets in with the passion for death, may there be a significance invisible and invincible as a zymotic disease, in the reluctance to conquer immortality which is sometimes cultivated either as a conscious whim, or a supposed sign of mental strength ? Hume speaks, somewhere, of a "decline of soul." Side by side with what may be almost called devout unbelievers, we find men whose skepticism as to spiritual facts is a species of new game, a philosophical lawn-tennis, wherewith to pass life's midsummer; and over against these, we find others still, by whom dispute with supernaturalism is rated as a synonym for force of character, and cultivated as an egotism rather than a consecration. May there not be among these cases of spiritual suicide ? Has he perhaps already begun to die in whom the tolerance of death is so indulgently regarded ? Is his life-principle already vitiated who can so idly court results which a sound and sane soul-vigor should abhor ? "Earnestness is the path of life," says the Dhammapada, "Thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless are as if dead already !"

Experts will tell us with what firmness, yet with what tenderness, the suicidal impulse is treated in hospitals for the insane ; how the unnatural passion for death is discouraged by exposing its unnaturalness, or by fostering the feeble love of life, if that be possible ; how gently the nature is aroused against itself ; how surgically the diseased conditions are handled, and how, upon the chance of the sufferer's recognizing his pathological position, and approaching himself as his own patient, all his hope of cure may hang.

It is by no means impossible that the suicidal nature of unbelief in a life to come, may yet find its soul-physicians in some psychological asylum of the future, wherein these diseases of the spirit shall be treated by a skill which must make our present methods of dealing with them seem, by contrast, like the blood-letting and strait-jacket, the dungeons and the chains of the Dark Age.

But once again : If these things be so, the familiar thought (even, as we have already seen, the familiar language) of the lower science has been the subject of a solemn unconscious selection in the service of that higher science of the soul to which we look.

In the struggle for immortality, the position of the individual holds a curiously interesting attitude toward the elevated nature of his environment. What is the insistence of individuality but the persistence of force? Or what its victory but a conservation of energy? What close economies there may be in spiritual agency, or what Law of Variation in spiritual inheritance, we know not. What is the protoplasm of spirit we can but guess. What supernatural selection may be at work upon us, we have yet to learn.

And yet again: Supposing there to be any value in these thoughts, they go toward proving the doctrine of the survival of the fittest a sublime and an inspired thing. If we have been thinking in the right direction, that is a doctrine which substantiates religious belief only less than religious belief substantiates it.

The revelation of nature and the revelation of the Word confirm each other as respects this stimulating conception of the human problem. The old urgency of faith and the new impetus of science move upon the same pulley.

Life is a proof of the power to live. Life is a proof of the qualification for life. We compete and strive, we yield or conquer, we adjust our individuality to our odds, we adjust our moral freedom to our individuality, we adjust our elemental love of duration to our moral freedom, and the lawful result abides. The spiritually weakest goes to the wall. The spiritually strongest conquers. He is the unfit who is beaten to death on the spiritual side of his nature. He is the fit survivor who saves his soul alive.

What manner of man may he be who shall be found capable of the final survival? Honest perplexity has its visions, and struggles toward them with noble discontent. Believing Christianity points to her Nazarene* and clings to the feet of the

* It will, of course, be remembered that our treatment of our subject has compelled us to dwell rather upon the law of God than the love of God; and that the ingenious tenderness of what Christians call their Gospel, constitutes an adaptation of supernatural science to natural helplessness which it is not our province here to elaborate.

sweet and solemn ideal which he has carved like a statue in the world.

Whether we have fixed our eyes upon the marble or the dream, the complicated nature of the struggle in which we are involved remains at least the one fact about which there can be no dispute. The finer we are, the more threads to our destinies. The stronger we are, the more strain upon our fiber. That first flaw of conduct which weakens our resistant power may find no steel fingers like those in the machinery of woollen-mills, which detect the defective threads and stop the weaving on the spot.

Supernatural selection has what may be called an artistic task in dealing with human character. The materials of duration may be found in mere morality, or a martyr's fate; they may pause at veracity or fly to aspiration; they may be sought in common humanity, or hide in exalted consecration.

Who shall say how the chance turns? At least, plainly, since law is justice, not against the paupers of heredity; not against the poor devils of the world as opposed to their betters. *Noblesse oblige* in the aristocracy of nature as in that of accident, and the highly-born may run the highest risks.

The man of many excellent qualities who protected himself at the expense of a woman—the woman of good intentions whose petty exactions defrauded a man of his best possibilities—might be beating the first retreat in the long struggle wherein the power of advance grows feeble faster than the consciousness of feebleness. The jocund entrance into the forest of worldliness, wherein, before we know it, the soul has lost the trail—the thin coating of social courage which we take for moral armor, when it may be only a species of metallic paint—the rust of selfishness wrought by sorrow or disease, and worn like an ornament by our unconscious vanity—might be the sign of the weakness which should defeat us in the ultimate struggle for survival, under some tremendous moral emergency, or crushing spiritual strain.

Our self-respect arises like a knight, “without fear and without reproach,” to defend such a view of the appeal of human life to human strength. Magnificent and terrible that challenge!

Is a man to be the weak, the worsted, the defective of nature? Is he crippled, maimed, unable of soul? Shall he surrender his chance at continuance for some inefficiency of temperament, or flabbiness of purpose, or lack of moral gentility? Shall he yield

to that slight tendency to be satisfied with an undertone in ideals, which may be the first step toward spiritual discord that must resist harmonizing unless in finer hands than his?

Shall he narcotize the nerve, or loll away the muscularity of a soul that had fitness in its power and survival at its bid?

All that he hath, will he not give for his life?

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.